

NEWS

State Collaborates with ARL and Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University to Distribute Manual of How to Identify and Report Animal Cruelty to Massachusetts Veterinarians

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Animal Rescue League of Boston

Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

Division of Professional Licensure

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

BOSTON — As the license renewal process begins for veterinarians across Massachusetts, the state's Division of Professional Licensure is collaborating with the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) and Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University to distribute a new tool to identify and report animal cruelty.

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, the Animal Rescue League of Boston and Animal Folks have collaborated to produce "**Reporting Animal Cruelty, The**

Role of the Veterinarian: Establishing Protocols to Identify and Report Suspected Animal Cruelty in Massachusetts". This manual provides an explanation of Massachusetts law and supporting material so that veterinarians can develop protocols for their clinic or practice to guide the reporting of cases of animal neglect, cruelty, and abuse. The manual is intended to strengthen the capacity of all who encounter animal cruelty to document and report this serious crime, and is available at no cost to veterinarians, their staff, and others in the field of veterinary medicine.

The Board of Registration of Veterinary Medicine will distribute an executive summary, with links to the Manual both via mail and online, to all veterinarians in Massachusetts at the time of their mandated license renewal for 2019.

"This manual will be an effective tool in assisting veterinarians in identifying the signs of abuse," said **John Chapman, Undersecretary of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation.** "Veterinarians must use their position to be a voice for the voiceless and we are glad to collaborate with the Animal Rescue League of Boston in ensuring those in the profession are equipped with the resources they need to protect animals from harm."

Veterinarians are at the forefront of everyday animal care, and this manual will cover all aspects of animal cruelty including: veterinarian's roles and responsibilities and documentation and reporting procedures; overviews of the "link" between animal abuse and human abuse, and current Massachusetts law.

Additionally, the Manual is now a part of the curriculum for veterinary students at Cummings School, and will also be distributed to professional organizations and lawmakers throughout the Commonwealth. Please note: This manual contains graphic images of animal cruelty and is not intended for the general public.

COMMENTS/ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Charles Borstel, Commissioner of the Division of Professional Licensure, which oversees the Board of Veterinary Medicine: “Veterinarians have a responsibility to report incidents of animal cruelty or abuse to the relevant authorities. It is my hope that, along with following the standards of practice, veterinarians utilize this resource to ensure the well-being of animals under their care.”

Patricia Dettlinger, DVM – VCA Area Medical Director NE1/NE2: “Fortunately, it is not often that we are presented with potential cases of animal abuse in our hospitals, however, when these situations arise, they are fraught with complexity, confusion and emotion, and we are often ill-prepared to manage them. There has been a general lack of information on how to recognize, report and document these cases, thus as a profession, we have not had adequate or organized protocols in place. The manual *Reporting Animal Cruelty, the Role of the Veterinarian* provides an invaluable resource which allows us to give this topic thoughtful consideration, understand the expectations of mandated reporting, and help us to have a plan in place should we be confronted with a suspected animal abuse case.”

Edward Schettino, DVM, PhD, Vice President of Animal Welfare and Veterinary Services, Animal Rescue League of Boston: “The link between violence towards animals as a predictor of future violence affecting both animals and humans has been clearly documented. My sincere hope is that this manual, by providing reporting processes and tools, empowers veterinarians to report cases of abuse or neglect. We, as veterinarians, have the power and responsibility to be advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves.”

Joyce Knoll, VMD, PhD, DACVP, dean *ad interim* at Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University: “In addition to sharing the manual with veterinarians across the nation, we will be incorporating this resource into the curriculum for DVM candidates

on our campus. Educating future veterinarians to recognize and report signs of animal abuse will play an important role in combatting the problem.”

Animal Rescue League of Boston

The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is an unwavering champion for animals in need, committed to keeping them safe and healthy in habitats and homes. Founded in 1899, ARL provides high quality veterinary care, adoption, and rescue services; while also confronting the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect through innovative community programs, police investigations, and public advocacy. In 2017, ARL served more than 18,000 animals throughout Massachusetts. ARL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. We receive no government grants or public funding and rely solely on the generosity of individuals to support programs and services that help animals in need. For more information please visit us online at www.arlboston.org (<http://www.arlboston.org>); and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AnimalRescueLeagueofBoston) (<https://www.facebook.com/AnimalRescueLeagueofBoston>), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ARLBostonRescue) (<https://twitter.com/ARLBostonRescue>), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/arlboston) (<https://www.instagram.com/arlboston>).

Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

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The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation protects and empowers consumers through advocacy and education, and ensures a fair playing field for the Massachusetts businesses its agencies regulate.

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Division of Professional Licensure

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The Division of Professional Licensure, through its 39 boards, licenses and regulates individuals and businesses in some 167 trades and professions.

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Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

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